

THE YOUTH MASTER PLAN YOUTH FORUMS

Nine forums were held in May 2013 – three each at George Washington, Hammond and Interim Education. Guidance counselors and administrators at each site selected forum participants, taking great care to assure a representation sample of the respective student bodies. Using keypads that immediately tabulated and visually displayed the results, 191 ACPS middle and high school students responded to twelve multiple choice statements/questions. Summarized below are the findings and a sampling of the comments (attached as an Appendix is the full list).

I ENJOY COMING TO SCHOOL.

There was not strong support for that statement – 46% of the students strongly agreed or agreed. Support was highest among GW 6th graders (68% strongly agreed or agreed). A significant number of students (29%) were neutral, including 42% of 6th graders and 36% of 7th graders at Hammond, and 36% of 7th graders at GW.

GW 6th grader: Working, bullies, drama

GW 7th grader: It's hard to enjoy it when teachers made some classes unfun and boring.

GW 8th grader: While I enjoy coming to school, I think the Honors program could be improved. I like to learn, but it's hard in open-enrollment Honors.

GW 8th grader: Hallways are really crowded. Classes aren't very engaging. Kids disrupt class all the time.

GW 8th grader: I personally believe that what they teach and how they teach it is ineffective.

Hammond 6th grader: It's okay. I don't like bullying or drama. There is so much drama here.

Hammond 7th grader: We get too much homework. I feel like teachers don't understand that we have a life outside of school. HW causes stress for students and less free time to have fun and be teens/kids.

Hammond 8th grader: There should be someone who you can talk to, so you can say "I shouldn't have detention because ..." or "I shouldn't be suspended because ..."

Hammond 8th grader: Put Hammond & GW together. More to interact so there is less rivalry between each school

Hammond 8th grader: We should have more hand touching experiments. Learn in a more IB way.

I FEEL PREPARED TO GO TO HIGH SCHOOL.

Two-thirds of all the students felt prepared for high school. The percentage was higher for GW 8th graders (79%) and Hammond 8th graders (74%). Over a third (36% or 4 students) of those enrolled in the Interim Education high school program strongly disagreed or disagreed. The number of Neutral responses was high: 21% overall, 27% for GW 7th graders (27%), and 32% for Hammond 6th graders.

GW 6th grader: I feel so scared.

GW 6th grader: I feel prepared because I know what's going on and I'll be ready.

GW 6th grader: Coming to school is fun. I learn but the pace is too fast.

GW 6th grader: I don't because I don't know what's coming and I don't want to take the SAT.

GW 7th grader: I do, however, feel that the L.A. curriculum is not rigorous enough and I think honors is not challenging enough. You should need to take a test to get in because some people are pushed into honors when they are not ready. There is not much difference between Gen-Ed and honors. I also think there should be Tag L.A. because there is math. Why isn't there SS, LA or Language Tag? I love French and would like to take TAG French.

GW 7th grader: The AVID program in the school is very helpful to the students because it supports you and teaches you how to be college ready.

GW 8th grader: For bullying – No; but yes for work!

GW 8th grader: I feel prepared, but I fear that the work ethic I have that has gotten me through all of middle school will not be enough for high school.

I AM STRUGGLING WITH MY SCHOOL WORK.

Of the total number of students participating in the forums, (46%) strongly disagreed or disagreed with that statement. The highest incidence of students who said they were not struggling was among GW 6th graders (52%) and Hammond 8th graders (55%). Almost a third of all students (32%) chose "Neutral". The percentage of those neutral among Interim Education middle school students was 60%; 44% for GW 7th graders, and 42% for Hammond 6th graders. Over a third (37% or ten students) of Hammond 7th graders indicated they are struggling. Five (42%) Interim Ed high school students and nine (27%) GW 8th graders indicated they are struggling.

GW 6th grader: I'm not because I'm not getting a lot of homework.

GW 6th grader: I struggle with math. It is my worst subject and I feel my teacher doesn't teach me that well.

GW 7th grader: When teachers don't explain or take the time to help us it's hard to do work.

GW 7th grader: Need more study groups.

GW 7th grader: The AVID program helps organize you. The teacher says you'll work much better if you are organized.

GW 8th grader: No, I disagree. There are times when I wish I had more time to do work, but in general, I'm not struggling.

GW 8th grader: Sometimes it's difficult because I play a high school sport, but I still get A's because my teachers don't hold me accountable. I can turn in all my homework on the last day of the quarter, and I still get a perfect grade.

Hammond 6th grader: I should turn in my work.

Hammond 6th grader: I think we should have clubs helping students on specific subjects.

Hammond 7th grader: Yes, sometimes because of the teachers (I have considered dropping out).

Hammond 7th grader: There are some things that I won't understand and no matter how many times the teacher goes over it, I still don't get it. We need to be taught in a way they we will want to learn and not forget.

Hammond 7th grader: Teachers don't really listen to you and help you. They also have a fast pace and keep going fast.

I HAVE CONSIDERED DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL.

The vast majority of students (83%) indicated they had not considered dropping out of school. However, 44% of the students in Interim Education did agree with the statement as well as five Hammond 6th graders (26%).

GW 8th grader: My friends want to work and have money at an early age.

GW 8th grader: Once, in 6th grade but not now.

GW 8th grader: My parents have raised me to believe that in order to get a good job and have money to raise a family you need to stay in school, and try your hardest which is the only way to go, I believe.

Hammond 7th grader: Sometimes I just want to skip class and stay home because the teachers are usually rude and so are some of the kids.

THERE IS A CARING ADULT AT MY SCHOOL OR RECREATION CENTER THAT I CAN TALK TO.

The majority (60%) strongly agreed or agreed. GW 6th graders were the most supportive with 84% strongly agreeing or agreeing. Also in agreement were 67% of GW 7th graders and 61% of Hammond 7th graders. Most Interim Education students (63%) disagreed. Of note is the number of GW students who identified Ms. Thomas as that caring adult.

GW 6th grader: Some teachers don't care.

GW 7th grader: Ms. Thomas is someone anyone could talk to and I wouldn't be judged.

GW 7th grader: I have two counselors and a couple of my teachers will always be there for me.

GW 7th grader: The counselor at school is always there when you need to talk to someone as far as I'm concerned. There are a lot of teachers in school that talk to you.

GW 8th grader: It's a good thing I have parents and friends, because there is NO ONE I can talk to at my school. At my elementary school, the rec center staff scared me.

GW 8th grader: I'm not close enough to any of my teachers.

GW 8th grader: Not really, they mostly seem emotionless.

Hammond 6th grader: My counselor should get to know students.

Hammond 6th grader: No, because adults in school and recreation centers show favoritism.

Hammond 6th grader: Most teachers. Most students just consider an adult who teaches, not as someone who can talk to.

Hammond 7th grader: I can talk to someone but not certain they would care. Keep it secret, not get involved if we need it.

Hammond 7th grader: Certain teachers should pay attention to our consequences, instead of theirs.

Stonewall High School Student: Cannot confide in adults because they tell your business.

THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA PROVIDES MEANINGFUL OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH.

While only 45% of all the students supported that statement, 73% of GW 8th graders did. However, 67% of the students in Interim Education and 64% of Hammond 7th graders strongly disagreed or disagreed. A fifth of all students were neutral.

GW 6th grader: There's not a lot of interesting activities. For sports, we shouldn't sign up at the beginning of the year.

GW 6th grader: Strongly disagree because they don't tell us and it's not fun.

GW 6th grader: Strongly disagree, do more fun things with the school. Nothing fun on weekends or weekdays

GW 7th grader: My sister goes to Charles Barrett and has many different afterschool activities (Chess Club, Language, Girls on the Run, etc.). I would like to see more of that at GW.

GW 7th grader: The Alexandria intramural club is good for students. They should have it all year long not just in the winter and spring.

GW 8th grader: Cora Kelly, open gym, trips, other stuff

GW 8th grader: The T.C. sports program is great, but I haven't really heard about any other programs just for teens.

GW 8th grader: Don't even try to make it better. I know it's not going to get better.

GW 8th grader: Not really, make a chess club. The clubs now only focus on a certain kind of person.

Hammond 6th grader: Ask kids where they want to go for field trips and make it happen; let's have a dance club with food.

Hammond 6th grader: It's all about sports, nothing else! All kids aren't really good at sports, so there should be some cool clubs.

Hammond 6th grader: There should be more activities, other transports and make afterschool on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Hammond 6th grader: No! Half of the things they do is sometimes boring. They should ask the students for what type of fun, educational field trips they want to do and have at least four educational field trips each quarter. They should have more clubs; have holiday parties for Halloween, Christmas, etc.

Hammond 6th grader: Most of the afterschool activities are sports. There should be a variety like art of music clubs.

Hammond 6th grader: We should have a video game club and clubs that us kids can create.

Hammond 7th grader: No. Intramurals are not enough. There NEEDS to be more soccer. I want to go to a soccer program at low cost, but I don't know how. I want to go to the Alexandria Soccer League.

Hammond 7th grader: We should have a variety of sports and clubs during and after school. More electives, too

Hammond 7th grader: Fun and relaxing (more work after school is not very fun).

Hammond 8th grader: Recreation centers need more up-to-date activities so that the teens can have more fun.

Hammond 8th grader: Have something for kids right after school.

A NUMBER OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS IN THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA HAVE SEATS FOR YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES THAT TOO OFTEN GO UNFILLED. WHAT WOULD INCREASE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AMONG TEENS?

The option selected by most students (36%) was to better publicize opportunities; 80% of Interim Education middle school students indicated a need for more publicity. The second most popular option was a City Council youth advisor (33% or 60 students). A number of comments spoke to the challenge transportation poses for youth who want to participate.

GW 6th grader: Help at retirement homes/community service/internships.

GW 6th grader: We need to know more about our school.

GW 7th grader: I think there should be a youth school board and a section for kids in the PTA. Elections should be held online either on Blackboard or another site. Students should be able to vote for school board members and have a say in their education system.

GW 8th grader: Transportation??? Please – I want to be in it; how can I get involved. Publicize it more. I didn't know there was a civic engagement.

GW 8th grader: Presentations by board members during the school day – to learn more about it.

GW 8th grader: Most people can't get there because they don't have a ride.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP TEENS BETTER APPRECIATE AND VALUE DIFFERENT CULTURAL, RACIAL AND ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS?

Most students (36%) recommended more opportunities for youth of different backgrounds to socialize; 28% suggested sponsoring more events that promote the importance of diversity. A Diversity Council was popular at GW and Hammond (33 students), but received no support from Interim Education students.

GW 6th grader: Like have a day about one culture and do that once a week.

GW 6th grader: Cultural understanding will be good.

GW 6th grader: DC has an annual festival to celebrate different cultures, so Alexandria should have something like that.

GW 7th grader: None, people should accept who they are and I feel that doing those things would make it worse.

GW 7th grader: I think we have more times to socialize then the racial effects will be more subtle and on the down low.

GW 7th grader: GW 1 & 2 should just be one school. We should have recess, during recess kids socialize and become better friends with people.

GW 8th grader: Events with the purpose of promoting diversity are just going to be awkward. We just need to meet people of different ethnicities to realize that they're just like us.

GW 8th grader: A lot of teens are made fun of for their culture so a Diversity Council is a great idea.

GW 8th grader: Mix groups in classes.

GW 8th grader: If other people respect me as well. Sometimes people are unfair and call me racist and don't respect me. So I think everyone needs to forget our differences. Other people of races call me bad names and say mean things so I won't want to befriend them

GW 8th grader: There should be a class or something that teaches more about world cultures or something to get us to open up more to others.

Hammond 6th grader: Raise money from fundraisers to go to different countries! Hold fairs with foods and cultural stuff from other countries.

Hammond 6th grader: Different cultural clothing. Presentations showing what it's like to be from other countries

Hammond 6th grader: I would go to an event about different cultures. Give away free stuff from that culture.

Hammond 6th grader: NEW GYM CLOTHES! Some people can't wear shorts because of religion. We need smaller size sweatpants.

Hammond 7th grader: Show them we are all the same!

Hammond 7th grader: Maybe sponsor a trip with a few students to travel to a different area in the world.

Hammond 8th grader: Separate them all and make them socialize with a certain group of people. Make them do exercises with other people.

Hammond 8th grader: Make the school more diverse by adding all sorts of different racial designs around the school and more foreign lunch.

A NUMBER OF ACPS STUDENTS INDICATED THEY HAD BEEN BULLIED ON SCHOOL PROPERTY. HOW CAN THAT SITUATION BE IMPROVED?

Three hundred and twenty-five (37%) ACPS middle school students taking the Youth Risk Behavior Survey in 2011 reported they had been bullied on school property. The corresponding percentage for ACPS high school students was 14.9% (282 students).

The recommendation of most of the students participating in the forums (34% or 61 students) was “more consistent consequences for bullying”. A fifth of the students selected “helping youth including those who have witnessed bullying.” The least popular option was more mentors and counselors for those who engage in bullying (14%).

GW 6th grader: More mentors and counselors for those who engage in bullying.

GW 6th grader: To tell kids that it’s ok to be a witness.

GW 6th grader: There is too much bullying and it needs to stop immediately and it needs more punishment. We need more hall monitors.

GW 6th grader: School will stop bullying. We should be able to report to the teacher.

GW 6th grader: This is hard because many kids will not care, and many kids will not report.

GW 6th grader: Bullying happens in classroom, bathrooms. To give them consequences because it is not ok to bully

GW 7th grader: If someone would hit me, I would want to hit them back but I wouldn’t like to get suspended because of self-defense.

GW 7th grader: A zero tolerance policy would help (immediate expulsion policy) or in-school suspension because that is more of a punishment.

GW 7th grader: GW doesn’t do much to prevent this problem. We should have a self-defense rule.

GW 7th grader: I feel like most people try to ignore the bullying and don’t get help. I feel that we don’t have enough support for the bullied.

GW 8th grader: I feel like the school has done nothing against bullying. Even teachers make fun when the school mentions anti-bullying.

GW 8th grader: Teach victims how to overcome it.

GW 8th grader: These kids NEED people to talk to!

GW 8th grader: Kids who are bullied or have been bullied need to be talked to. In some cases it causes depression and PTSD. Kids need to be talked to.

GW 8th grader: Personally, I feel like GW2 takes care of bullying terribly. Bullies get off so easy by saying it’s a joke. Even if you get expelled you can come back next semester. That’s stupid; expulsion is when you never come back.

GW 8th grader: Get rid of people with too much swag.

GW 8th grader: Don’t just use stupid signs and campaigns because they don’t work.

Hammond 6th grader: Some teachers ignore.

Hammond 6th grader: Maybe safety patrols on the bus (youth). The patrols should be us middle schoolers.

Hammond 6th grader: Suspend and give detentions and be more strict on bullies to prevent it.

Hammond 7th grader: Have a program – I already made a program. NMBP! (No More Bullying Program) Check it out, FCH1. Nikhita Bhanot

Hammond 7th grader: A lot of teachers see bullying and not make a big deal out of it. Also administrators need to talk to teachers and tell them to STOP bullying when they see it.

Hammond 8th grader: Make the bullies see how bullying is by letting them be bullied.

Stonewall High Schooler: I feel as if I'm getting bullied every day and the person that bullies me ends up hitting me, and then I fight back then I end up getting in trouble too (it's self-defense).

WHAT WOULD REDUCE THE NUMBER OF FIGHTS?

Over half of ACPS middle school students (457) and over a quarter of ACPS high school students (463) participating in the 2011 YRBS stated they had been involved in a fight. The number of high school students who fought on school property was 215.

Of the students participating in the forums, 38% (69 students) recommended anger management or counseling for those who fight. The second most popular option was more staff in the halls and common areas (20%) followed by consistent consequences (18%).

GW 6th grader: More counselors. But I want Ms. Thomas.

GW 6th grader: There should be 6th graders in the hall at a time and just 7th graders in the hall at a time and just 8th graders in the hall at a time because it seems like younger kids see older kids fighting in the halls so they think it is a good idea to do that.

GW 6th grader: There are not enough staff to prevent bullying.

GW 6th grader: We need more people in the halls.

GW 7th grader: In-school suspension

GW 7th grader: If we do more peer mediation then they could solve their problems; not through fighting but through talking.

GW 8th grader: Who knows. More consequences. I have seen 3 fights in one year in this school. That was when I had just started. Imagine how I felt.

GW 8th grader: Nothing, fighting is inevitable. Maybe not at school but it could carry on afterschool or before school.

GW 8th grader: For everyone not to be so hateful and/or jealous. So mentors

GW 8th grader: GW is a perfect example of the fact that having more adults standing around doesn't do anything. It doesn't solve the problem.

GW 8th grader: Fighting is half the fun of public school and it should not be eliminated do don't try.

GW 8th grader: If people weren't so nasty and rude. Also if kids weren't so afraid to tell a teacher someone wanted to fight them. Most times kids are afraid they will get hurt more for telling a teacher. SAFETY!

GW 8th grader: Make them hold hands as punishment in front of the cafeteria.

Hammond 6th grader: If someone hears someone is going to fight they should tell.

Hammond 6th grader: Stay out all drama. Don't care what people think about you. A lot of cost too much money.

Hammond 6th grader: More guards/police.

Hammond 6th grader: It shouldn't be ____ if someone hits, go and tell an adult. But second time if someone hits you, you try to walk away but if they keep hitting you, you hit them. It's simple as that. More staff is too much.

Hammond 6th grader: Students who fight should be expelled. Some teachers ignore the fight.

Hammond 6th grader: They should not have staff in the rest room because it would be uncomfortable.

Hammond 7th grader: We should have more guidance counselors.

Hammond 7th grader: Anger management doesn't really help. To be honest, it might make people want to fight more. It can control their anger, but it makes more anger build up until they hit someone.

Hammond 7th grader: By letting students get their anger out another way, free time. We have anger management here and it doesn't work.

Hammond 7th grader: Since fights are after lunch they should release students little by little so a lot of people won't be let out at the same time and cause a lot of chaos.

Hammond 8th grader: Just make sure teachers realize when a kid's angry.

Hammond 8th grader: If fights occur, self-defense should not have a bad consequence.

A NUMBER OF ACPS STUDENTS HAVE INDICATED THEY HAVE CONSIDERED SUICIDE OR MADE A PLAN. WHAT KINDS OF ASSISTANCE DO THESE STUDENTS NEED?

Nineteen percent of ACPS middle school students (164 students) indicated on the 2011 YRBS that they had seriously considered suicide and 100 said they had made a plan. The number of ACPS high school students who said they had seriously considered suicide was 221 and most (197) said they had made a suicide plan.

The type of assistance recommended by most students attending the forums (42%) was assigning a mentor; 19% recommended evening and/or weekend hours at the Teen Wellness Center. Over a quarter (29%) of Interim Education students supported in-school screening. GW requested the question on suicide be removed from the survey.

Hammond 6th grader: They should go to jail.

Hammond 7th grader: I think these kids need to stop.

Hammond 7th grader: More counseling. For example, last year I went through the same thing, but no one helped me.

Hammond 7th grader: Teachers and parents need to approach those children in a calm way and help them get through it. Make them feel happy and do stuff to help them try to eliminate the cause.

Hammond 8th grader: Some teachers don't know how to keep your mouth closed. Alternatives for doing it; self-inflicting pain; cut themselves or take drugs.

Hammond 8th grader: There should be more programs to keep them busy, have a test to see how they feel each month and have a mentor to talk to.

Hammond 8th grader: The kids can have a therapy session.

WHAT WOULD HELP TEENS MAINTAIN A HEALTHY BODY WEIGHT?

Forty-two percent of ACPS middle school students (363 students) and 45% of high school students (852) indicated on YRBS that they are trying to lose weight. The recommendation of most of the students attending the youth forums (59%) was more out-of-school time programs that promote physical activity. The second most popular option was cooking classes (25%).

GW 6th grader: Subway, recess, longer gym period, not more running

GW 6th grader: Play lacrosse

GW 6th grader: We NEED better school lunches. Fun, yummy ways to eat (e.g. low fat cupcakes with rainbow sprinkles)

GW 6th grader: Be able to go to the gym workout room after school.

GW 6th grader: If we don't have homework because we sit and get fat instead of being outside; better school lunches.

GW 6th grader: Physical things, more PE classes; more sports, better school lunches, lacrosse, recess, less homework

GW 7th grader: Mandatory elective for people who are an unhealthy weight because not everyone participates in gym. Nutrition lecture followed by preparing the food and eating it.

GW 7th grader: I feel kids shouldn't be worried about their weight. They would be more willing to eat healthy if the school food was good.

GW 7th grader: The school is giving the money to band and other things, but the physical education program isn't really enough. We don't have enough money for the equipment in the gym.

GW 8th grader: Teens can maintain a good healthy weight if ACPS had more PE hours because when PE done, then they don't care about the weight.

GW 8th grader: Learn to eat at a minimum.

GW 8th grader: If school lunches were healthier, because I truly believe they are a part of the problem. Tiny school lunches make kids go home and eat more.

GW 8th grader: Don't be hypocritical and say you want us to healthy, and then serve us terribly unhealthy school lunches.

Hammond 6th grader: We need more lines for choices for lunch.

Hammond 6th grader: Better organic foods in cafeteria.

Hammond 6th grader: Some type of break during school to go outside.

Hammond 7th grader: Not physical education but dancing or doing something fun to lose weight.

Hammond 7th grader: The school makes us buy fruits and vegetables but no one eats them because they are nasty.

Hammond 7th grader: My opinion is that you can't really help them because it is their choice and life. Also what they do at home is up to them.

Hammond 8th grader: More sports teams for everyone to participate.

Hammond 8th grader: Make a trainer come twice a month; more physical field trips.

Hammond 8th grader: Kids that need to eat more.

Hammond 8th grader: A physical fitness elective. Better food in cafeteria.

ALEXANDRIA'S TEEN PREGNANCY RATE IN 2011 WAS THE THIRD HIGHEST IN THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGION, BEHIND ONLY MANASSAS CITY AND FALLS CHURCH CITY. HOW CAN THAT RATE BE REDUCED?

Promoting ACAP was recommended by 57% of the students at the forums; 39% endorsed establishing a school-based voluntary pregnancy system that links students with services. No student selected "Engage the parents of pregnant teens and teen parents to help ensure responsible decision making." The vast majority of students at the forums had not heard of ACAP. GW requested the question on teen pregnancy be removed from the survey.

Hammond 6th grader: Don't be sexually active.

Hammond 6th grader: Health class should be more scarier so students don't have sex.

Hammond 7th grader: Use condoms, give teens more condoms.

Hammond 7th grader: ABSTINENCE!!!!

Hammond 8th grader: Speakers that come in who have been involved in a teen pregnancy to talk about consequence.

Hammond 8th grader: Have clinics; parents talk to their child.

Hammond 8th grader: Provide birth control and condoms; have a campaign.

Hammond 8th grader: People who get pregnant when they were teens to talk to students about their responsibility and consequences they had to face during their pregnancy.

Hammond 8th grader: Get free condoms at school starting in 8th or 9th grade. Also have more assemblies about consequences of having sex as a teen. Engaging parents of pregnant teens is a good idea. We should be awarded for not getting pregnant

Hammond 8th grader: Stop girls from being fat and give more advertisement on condoms. Some parents should stress the consequences of being parents.

WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE TO DISCOURAGE DRINKING AND SMOKING?

A third of ACPS middle school students participating in the 2011 YRBS indicated they had used alcohol (287) and almost a fifth (167) said they had tried smoking. Corresponding percentages for high school students were 54% for alcohol (1,018) and 36% (682).

Youth forum participants advised promoting SAPCA (54%). On that note, the vast majority of those in attendance had not heard of SAPCA. The second most popular choice was incorporating alcohol and other drug assessments into adolescent/well-teen exams. GW requested the question on drinking and smoking be removed from the survey.

Hammond 6th grader: Do drug tests

Hammond 6th grader: Teaching about peer pressure

Hammond 6th grader: When the kids are in their classes, they should get dogs to sniff out all of the lockers.

Hammond 6th grader: More smoke alarms. More cameras in school

Hammond 7th grader: Making sure to have group sessions about drinking and drugs.

Hammond 7th grader: Show them what can happen and do drug test.

Hammond 7th grader: Drug and alcohol tests in school. Mandatory and tell parents and if parents don't care then have counseling.

Hammond 7th grader: Parents should know that it is highly important for parents to know.

Hammond 8th grader: The commercials about lung cancer.

Hammond 8th grader: Have a real-life person come in and talk about it who has drank or done cigarettes.

Hammond 8th grader: Too easy to access it.

Stonewall 1st Session: Smoking: show more voice box advertisements

WHAT WOULD HELP TEENS WHO WANT TO WORK FIND EMPLOYMENT?

Paid internships were very popular among youth forum participants – 47% (72 students) identified it as the best strategy. That was followed by creating a volunteer/intern training program that prepares teens to serve in workforce related positions (selected by 24% of the students).

GW 6th grader: Since we have a kindergarten thing in GWMS, we kids should go down and help.

GW 6th grader: We should teach teens how to do hands-on CPR. Create activities and groups to help the community that are fun and not boring.

GW 6th grader: Go to elementary schools to help kids.

GW 6th grader: Have more group opportunity, and let many teens have jobs so they know what it is like to be an adult.

GW 7th grader: Create a teen "labor union" that had certification classes, recommended babysitting wages and a bank.

GW 7th grader: Babysitting, make a service for baby sitting and hire people.

GW 7th grader: We need more jobs for teens not just during the summer.

GW 7th grader: I think that teachers and staff center should become more involved.

Hammond 6th grader: Have volunteer work at recreation like after school or summer or weekend.

Hammond 6th grader: Have someone teach us about how to get a job.

Hammond 6th grader: Put up some summer jobs or jobs near school. Jobs inside the school

Hammond 6th grader: They should have a session for two weeks each for finding jobs that hire young people. Can work for money or for school job.

Hammond 7th grader: \$30 per hour depending on the physical and mental strain.

Hammond 7th grader: Teens can do simple stuff like dog-walking and get paid.

Hammond 7th grader: Job opportunities for younger children!

Hammond 8th grader: Have somebody go out to find jobs for teens and post them on the ACPS website to help students know about available jobs.

Hammond 8th grader: I think creating a volunteer internship would be really smart because I need to make money. Paid internships would be really smart.

Stonewall 1st session: The only thing I don't agree with is that you have to make a certain amount of money in order for the kids to get a summer job through JobLink program.

WRITTEN COMMENTS BY YOUTH MASTER PLAN YOUTH FORUM PARTICIPANTS

I ENJOY COMING TO SCHOOL.

GW 6th grader: They give a lot of homework

GW 6th grader: I wake up early and too much homework

GW 6th grader: There are fights sometimes

GW 6th grader: Working, bullies, drama

GW 7th grader: It's hard to enjoy it when teachers made some classes unfun and boring

GW 8th grader: I don't like having to sit still all day and wake up early. It should be hands-on

GW 8th grader: I don't because the work is frustrating and hard

GW 8th grader: While I enjoy coming to school, I think the Honors program could be improved. I like to learn, but it's hard in open-enrollment Honors.

GW 8th grader: I get to learn new things and strive to be better

GW 8th grader: Teachers are disrespectful

GW 8th grader: Hallways are really crowded. Classes aren't very engaging. Kids disrupt class all the time

GW 8th grader: I personally believe that what they teach and how they teach it is ineffective

Hammond 6th grader: It's okay. I don't like bullying or drama. There is so much drama here

Hammond 7th grader: We get too much homework. I feel like teachers don't understand that we have a life outside of school. HW causes stress for students and less free time to have fun and be teens/kids.

Hammond 8th grader: Why don't you make things more interactive for students? Stop making kids have to be so strict and just let the kids be kids. That's why kids show out.

Hammond 8th grader: There should be someone who you can talk to, so you can say "I shouldn't have detention because ..." or "I shouldn't be suspended because ..."

Hammond 8th grader: Put Hammond & GW together. More to interact so there is less rivalry between each school

Hammond 8th grader: We should have more hand touching experiments.

I FEEL PREPARED TO GO TO HIGH SCHOOL.

GW 6th grader: I feel so scared.

GW 6th grader: I'm nervous about it ... lots of homework! Too many scary tests (on next question said with the right potential and effort, you can get good/ok grades).

GW 6th grader: I feel prepared because I know what's going on and I'll be ready.

GW 6th grader: Doing projects and keeping up with my homework.

GW 6th grader: Coming to school is fun. I learn but the pace is too fast.

GW 6th grader: I still am very confused.

GW 6th grader: No, I feel like I still have to study hard.

GW 6th grader: I don't because I don't know what's coming and I don't want to take the SAT.

GW 6th grader: Because I don't know everything that I need.

GW 6th grader: Because we need to get rid of Mr. Earnest, a history substitute teacher.

GW 7th grader: I do, however, feel that the L.A. curriculum is not rigorous enough and I think honors is not challenging enough. You should need to take a test to get in because some people are pushed into honors when they are not ready. There is not much difference between Gen-Ed and honors. I also think there should be Tag L.A. because there is math. Why isn't there SS, LA or Language Tag? I love French and would like to take TAG French.

GW 7th grader: I think we need to learn freedom and more knowledge or else we won't be ready.

GW 7th grader: Yes and no because I'm not sure if I'm, ready to learn the classes there, but I am excited for it.

GW 7th grader: It's hard to remember some things, but I think I am ready.

GW 7th grader: The AVID program in the school is very helpful to the students because it supports you and teaches you how to be college ready.

GW 8th grader: For bullying – No; but yes for work!

GW 8th grader: I feel prepared, but I fear that the work ethic I have that has gotten me through all of middle school will not be enough for high school.

GW 8th grader: I already take three high school courses.

GW 8th grader: Classes could use more time for questions during the lesson. Sometimes kids can't stay after school so then the work just gets harder.

Hammond 6th grader: Half and half

Hammond 6th grader: Have teachers explain more easier ways to do certain methods.

Hammond 7th grader: Not at all because I need to step up.

I AM STRUGGLING WITH MY SCHOOL WORK

GW 6th grader: Don't always get good grades and for projects feel like there's not a long time.

GW 6th grader: I feel like I don't know – some classes are easy and some are hard.

GW 6th grader: I'm not because I'm not getting a lot of homework.

GW 6th grader: It depends.

GW 6th grader: I struggle with math. It is my worst subject and I feel my teacher doesn't teach me that well.

GW 6th grader: Neutral, because I need help in history.

GW 6th grader: My teacher doesn't teach well to understand.

GW 7th grader: When teachers don't explain or take the time to help us it's hard to do work.

GW 7th grader: Not exactly struggling but I just forget about it and then don't do it.

GW 7th grader: Need more study groups.

GW 7th grader: The AVID program helps organize you. The teacher says you'll work much better if you are organized.

GW 8th grader: Teacher give too much work and we have each class everyday.

GW 8th grader: I used to until I got my head in the game. The work is too consuming.

GW 8th grader: No, I disagree. There are times when I wish I had more time to do work, but in general, I'm not struggling.

GW 8th grader: They give us too much and we get stress.

GW 8th grader: Math mainly and some science

GW 8th grader: In Language Arts, Ms. Given's class is way harder than others.

GW 8th grader: Too much language arts homework.

GW 8th grader: The teachers could help, because they (most) don't answer questions.

GW 8th grader: Sometimes it's difficult because I play a high school sport, but I still get A's because my teachers don't hold me accountable. I can turn in all my homework on the last day of the quarter, and I still get a perfect grade.

GW 8th grader: Never, I have all the materials that I need.

GW 8th grader: It is too complicated.

GW 8th grader: I'll be okay.

GW 8th grader: Math can be challenging but I usually get help.

GW 8th grader: Kinda, the curriculum is hard.

Hammond 6th grader: Sometimes, I need more help.

Hammond 6th grader: I should turn in my work.

Hammond 6th grader: Less work, please. That would be great. Also less stressful

Hammond 6th grader: To get more help in math because his explanations are confusing.

Hammond 6th grader: Get more help in Math after school and by studying more.

Hammond 6th grader: Go to tutoring and ask more questions. Stay after school for Math, Chinese and Language Arts.

Hammond 6th grader: I think we should have clubs helping students on specific subjects.

Hammond 7th grader: Yes, sometimes because of the teachers (I have considered dropping out).

Hammond 7th grader: Don't always feel secure with my work. I give up if I don't understand a lot.

Hammond 7th grader: Math is a main subject that I feel everyone struggles with that one subject. Most math teachers are always out on a new topic.

Hammond 7th grader: There are some things that I won't understand and no matter how many times the teacher goes over it, I still don't get it. We need to be taught in a way they we will want to learn and not forget.

Hammond 7th grader: Teachers don't really listen to you and help you. They also have a fast pace and keep going fast.

I HAVE CONSIDERED DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL.

GW 6th grader: I don't because I don't want to be a hobo. I want to be successful.

GW 8th grader: My friends want to work and have money at an early age.

GW 8th grader: I have not, but for the people that have, it would be helpful for teachers to tell those students that staying in school is the only way to get a good job.

GW 8th grader: Never, if I do drop out of school I'll never get a job.

GW 8th grader: School gets boring.

GW 8th grader: My parents have raised me to believe that in order to get a good job and have money to raise a family you need to stay in school, and try your hardest which is the only way to go, I believe.

GW 8th grader: Once, in 6th grade but not now.

Hammond 6th grader: Maybe

Hammond 7th grader: Sometimes I just want to skip class and stay home because the teachers are usually rude and so are some of the kids.

Hammond 7th grader: During Advisory teachers should let us go and talk to people/teachers.

Hammond 8th grader: For people who want to drop out, show them the bright side of high school.

THERE IS A CARING ADULT AT MY SCHOOL OR RECREATION CENTER THAT I CAN TALK TO.

GW 6th grader: Some of these adults are not nice.

GW 6th grader: Ms. Thomas

GW 6th grader: Ms. Thomas. I've always come to her.

GW 6th grader: Yes, Ms. Thomas and Mr. Deriggué.

GW 6th grader: There is and the person is Ms. Tigie.

GW 6th grader: I can talk to Ms. Tigie sometimes about different things.

GW 6th grader: Some teachers don't care.

GW 6th grader: I have a lot I can trust.

GW 7th grader: Ms. Thomas is someone anyone could talk to and I wouldn't be judged.

GW 7th grader: I have two counselors and a couple of my teachers will always be there for me.

GW 7th grader: My counselor

GW 7th grader: I guess I would talk to an adults but I wouldn't feel comfortable. My home life is good so I would talk to my parents or my friends.

GW 7th grader: The counselor at school is always there when you need to talk to someone as far as I'm concerned. There are a lot of teachers in school that talk to you.

GW 8th grader: Guidance counselors are the best to talk to.

GW 8th grader: Most adults don't care.

GW 8th grader: Ms. Thomas is there for everyone.

GW 8th grader: Mrs. Tigie (She is the Best!), Ms. Ives

GW 8th grader: Duhhhhhhhh

GW 8th grader: It's a good thing I have parents and friends, because there is NO ONE I can talk to at my school. At my elementary school, the rec center staff scared me.

GW 8th grader: There are several teachers and my counselor.

GW 8th grader: I'm not close enough to any of my teachers.

GW 8th grader: Ms. Avagliano, Mr. Perkins, and Ms. Thomas. I know if something was wrong and I couldn't contact my parents, I would go to one of them.

GW 8th grader: Not really, they mostly seem emotionless.

Hammond 6th grader: No. Depends – some teachers show favoritism.

Hammond 6th grader: Both. The counselor needs to get to know them and the kid needs to get to know the counselor more.

Hammond 6th grader: My counselor should get to know students.

Hammond 6th grader: Sometimes, also I want some respect from them.

Hammond 6th grader: A lot of teachers show favoritism.

Hammond 6th grader: Yes, but most show favoritism.

Hammond 6th grader: Some teachers are nice and show favoritism. Others are disrespectful and blame you for something you did NOT do.

Hammond 6th grader: No, because adults in school and recreation centers show favoritism and they don't really (?)

Hammond 6th grader: Most teachers. Most students just consider an adult who teaches, not as someone who can talk to.

Hammond 6th grader: I think teachers should be more comfortable around students. Some teachers show favoritism.

Hammond 7th grader: Teachers need to listen.

Hammond 7th grader: Teachers need to let us be heard; getting written up for no reason.

Hammond 7th grader: I can talk to someone but not certain they would care. Keep it secret, not get involved if we need it.

Hammond 7th grader: More trustworthy – take out punishments individually, not everyone

Hammond 7th grader: Some teachers, some seem like they don't care, and teachers should listen to what we have to say.

Hammond 7th grader: Yes – sometimes. Teachers need to listen more!

Hammond 7th grader: Certain teachers should pay attention to our consequences, instead of theirs.

Stonewall 1st Session: Cannot confide in adults because they tell your business

THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA PROVIDES MEANINGFUL OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH.

GW 6th grader: There's not a lot of interesting activities. For sports, we shouldn't sign up at the beginning of the year.

GW 6th grader: We should get outside more.

GW 6th grader: Answered neutral; There are only a little good activities. Some are boring. Art Buzz is the best though! You could get students to choose some good activities; have them suggest activities.

GW 6th grader: NO!!

GW 6th grader: Not a lot, because there aren't a lot of clubs that are more interesting for teens.

GW 6th grader: They are fun, extra activities.

GW 6th grader: Not really.

GW 6th grader: Alexandria provides only a couple of meaningful out-of-school activities for me.

GW 6th grader: Strongly disagree because they don't tell us and it's not fun.

GW 6th grader: Strongly disagree, do more fun things with the school. Nothing fun on weekends or weekdays

GW 6th grader: Disagree, because they don't tell you.

GW 7th grader: Provide extreme sports activities.

GW 7th grader: My sister goes to Charles Barrett and has many different afterschool activities (Chess Club, Language, Girls on the Run, etc.). I would like to see more of that at GW.

GW 7th grader: I don't like the reading project over the summer and the fact that it is a grade.

GW 7th grader: Sometimes make it more competitive.

GW 7th grader: There are intramurals that are fun and then other classes/groups are held for other interests.

GW 7th grader: We should have a little bit more teen activities.

GW 7th grader: The Alexandria intramural club is good for students. They should have it all year long not just in the winter and spring.

GW 8th grader: Better activities that can be good timing for our schedule.

GW 8th grader: More clubs

GW 8th grader: Alexandria has many activities.

GW 8th grader: Cora Kelly, open gym, trips, other stuff

GW 8th grader: The T.C. sports program is great, but I haven't really heard about any other programs just for teens.

GW 8th grader: I do crew and maybe next year I'll do some football.

GW 8th grader: Don't even try to make it better. I know it's not going to get better.

GW 8th grader: The one time I played a rec game activity a girl decided to beat me up (I didn't hit her and I got in trouble) and the people who worked there decided to try and shove and trip my coaches. Try and make them fair.

GW 8th grader: Theater, orchestra

GW 8th grader: Yes, I play lacrosse.

GW 8th grader: Not really, make a chess club. The clubs now only focus on a certain kind of person.

Hammond 6th grader: More field trips and actually make it happen; Fashion Club

Hammond 6th grader: Ask kids where they want to go for field trips and make it happen; let's have a dance club with food.

Hammond 6th grader: We should have a dancing club.

Hammond 6th grader: Afterschool activities other than sports.

Hammond 6th grader: It's all about sports, nothing else! All kids aren't really good at sports, so there should be some cool clubs.

Hammond 6th grader: They should let the kids make their own clubs with approval from the principal.

Hammond 6th grader: There should be a variety of different activities.

Hammond 6th grader: There should be more activities, other transports and make afterschool on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Hammond 6th grader: No! Half of the things they do is sometimes boring. They should ask the students for what type of fun, educational field trips they want to do and have at least four educational field trips each quarter. They should have more clubs; have holiday parties for Halloween, Christmas, etc.

Hammond 6th grader: Have activities that everyone can have fun. Like dances and more clubs like fan clubs. Have school, but you have clubs and dances.

Hammond 6th grader: Most of the afterschool activities are sports. There should be a variety like art of music clubs.

Hammond 6th grader: We should have a video game club and clubs that us kids can create.

Hammond 7th grader: Do stuff that's fun.

Hammond 7th grader: A sport team; afterschool homework club.

Hammond 7th grader: Step Team; clubs

Hammond 7th grader: Dancing, parties, doing a club

Hammond 7th grader: No, they should have more dancing and ACPS parties.

Hammond 7th grader: Some of the activities aren't even done. Parties, games clubs – that's what we like.

Hammond 7th grader: No. They should add something like piano lessons.

Hammond 7th grader: Parties; ACPS Dance Club

Hammond 7th grader: Most of the time when students do go to those parties or activities they get bored easily and sometimes they leave early.

Hammond 7th grader: The intramurals aren't fun.

Hammond 7th grader: Club leaders kick kids out of clubs if they don't come a lot of times. I think that just coming there whenever we want to for fun is up to us and we shouldn't get kicked out of it.

Hammond 7th grader: No. Intramurals are not enough. There NEEDS to be more soccer. I want to go to a soccer program at low cost, but I don't know how. I want to go to the Alexandria Soccer League.

Hammond 7th grader: We should have a variety of sports and clubs during and after school. More electives too

Hammond 7th grader: Fun and relaxing (more work after school is not very fun).

Hammond 7th grader: Do more activities that are fun.

Hammond 8th grader: They don't have some activities kids really wanna do.

Hammond 8th grader: Have more extra-curricular activities after school.

Hammond 8th grader: Recreation centers need more up-to-date activities so that the teens can have more fun.

Hammond 8th grader: Better amusement parks to raise money for pools.

Hammond 8th grader: Have something for kids right after school.

Stonewall 1st Session: More opportunities for physical exercise not linked to sports.

Stonewall 1st Session: Boys & Girls Club on the other side of town.

A NUMBER OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS IN THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA HAVE SEATS FOR YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES THAT TOO OFTEN GO UNFILLED. WHAT WOULD INCREASE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AMONG TEENS?

GW 6th grader: Field trips

GW 6th grader: Help at retirement homes/ community service/internships

GW 6th grader: We need to know more about our school.

GW 6th grader: They should help with the community.

GW 7th grader: I think there should be a youth school board and a section for kids in the PTA. Elections should be held online either on Blackboard or another site. Students should be able to vote for school board members and have a say in their education system.

GW 7th grader: Give teens more opportunities to do different things.

GW 7th grader: I think that better publicize opportunities for youth to serve will really involve teen in civic engagement.

GW 8th grader: Someone should come and explain to all teens.

GW 8th grader: Transportation??? Please – I want to be in it; how can I get involved. Publicize it more. I didn't know there was a civic engagement.

GW 8th grader: Presentations by board members during the school day – to learn more about it

GW 8th grader: Provide transportation; money included in service.

GW 8th grader: People have things to do on the weekends.

GW 8th grader: Don't let board members come, it will bore people.

GW 8th grader: It's not that youth don't want to serve, it's that Alexandria doesn't spend enough time and money letting the youth know about the opportunities!!!

GW 8th grader: I believe it would be ethical for a youth advisor for City Councilmembers.

GW 8th grader: Let adults do work.

GW 8th grader: The best way is to physically involve younger kids – youth advisor.

GW 8th grader: Publicize and recruit

GW 8th grader: Most people can't get there because they don't have a ride.

Hammond 6th grader: Youth advisor

Hammond 6th grader: We should have petitions and environmental projects.

Hammond 6th grader: Who know better about teens than teens.

Hammond 8th grader: Do all of them. Actually campaign at schools.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP TEENS BETTER APPRECIATE AND VALUE DIFFERENT CULTURAL, RACIAL AND ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS?

GW 6th grader: Field trips; better food

GW 6th grader: We should have a period to get out, field trips, spend time with others.

GW 6th grader: We need more field trips.

GW 6th grader: Socialize more; a period to socialize with friends.

GW 6th grader: Have a field trip during a period.

GW 6th grader: Like have a day about one culture and do that once a week.

GW 6th grader: More field trips

GW 6th grader: Culturally relevant and importance of diversity

GW 6th grader: Sponsor more events to show the importance of diversity.

GW 6th grader: Cultural understanding will be good

GW 6th grader: DC has an annual festival to celebrate different cultures, so Alexandria should have something like that.

GW 6th grader: A period where we can just talk, have a social hours. More field trips

GW 6th grader: More events will be more fun for those kids and the school. Cultural night or days. Time to talk at school/ social hour

GW 7th grader: None, people should accept who they are and I feel that doing those things would make it worse.

GW 7th grader: More events that sponsor diversity during school

GW 7th grader: I think we have more times to socialize then the racial effects will be more subtle and on the down low.

GW 7th grader: GW 1 & 2 should just be one school. We should have recess, during recess kids socialize and become better friends with people.

GW 7th grader: Should bring the whole school together or either during advisory.

GW 8th grader: That people should let us socialize more.

GW 8th grader: Make teen more aware of other races and cultures and show them what is really happening.

GW 8th grader: Have more language choices and more lunch choices. Diverse class rooms

GW 8th grader: To talk about differences

GW 8th grader: Events with the purpose of promoting diversity are just going to be awkward. We just need to meet people of different ethnicities to realize that they're just like us.

GW 8th grader: A lot of teens are made fun of for their culture so a Diversity Council is a great idea.

GW 8th grader: Mix groups in classes

GW 8th grader: If other people respect me as well. Sometimes people are unfair and call me racist and don't respect me. So I think everyone needs to forget our differences. Other people of races call me bad names and say mean things so I won't want to befriend them.

GW 8th grader: Have more outside activities

GW 8th grader: Mix different people of different backgrounds together.

GW 8th grader: Have more parties that influence different cultures.

GW 8th grader: There should be a class or something that teaches more about world cultures or something to get us to open up more to others.

Hammond 6th grader: Car wash, fair; sponsor events

Hammond 6th grader: Have Heritage Night

Hammond 6th grader: Raise money from fundraisers to go to different countries! Hold fairs with foods and cultural stuff from other countries

Hammond 6th grader: Different cultural clothing. Presentations showing what it's like to be from other countries

Hammond 6th grader: Workshops, fairs

Hammond 6th grader: Hold fairs and different types of fundraisers. Heritage night for more understanding in cultures

Hammond 6th grader: We should do a car wash and fundraiser to raise money for more supplies and for more field trips.

Hammond 6th grader: I would go to an event about different cultures. Give away free stuff from that culture.

Hammond 6th grader: NEW GYM CLOTHES! Some people can't wear shorts because of religion. We need smaller size sweatpants.

Hammond 6th grader: Have a Heritage Day to talk about our heritage and compare it and see what they do

Hammond 7th grader: Weeks or certain days to learn about different cultures

Hammond 7th grader: Show them we are all the same!

Hammond 7th grader: Maybe sponsor a trip with a few students to travel to a different area in the world.

Hammond 7th grader: We could/can have a diversity club; have cultural nights.

Hammond 8th grader: Separate them all and make them socialize with a certain group of people. Make them do exercises with other people.

Hammond 8th grader: Teach them more about other cultures and things. Tell them interesting facts and things

Hammond 8th grader: Have a day where afterschool is a cultural day where different countries make food and talk about their different cultures.

Hammond 8th grader: Make the school more diverse by adding all sorts of different racial designs around the school and more foreign lunch.

A NUMBER OF ACPs STUDENTS INDICATED THEY HAD BEEN BULLIED ON SCHOOL PROPERTY. HOW CAN THAT SITUATION BE IMPROVED?

GW 6th grader: Should help people with bullying

GW 6th grader: More mentors

GW 6th grader: More mentors and counselors for those who engage in bullying.

GW 6th grader: To tell kids that it's ok to be a witness.

GW 6th grader: There is too much bullying and it needs to stop immediately and it needs more punishment. We need more hall monitors.

GW 6th grader: School will stop bullying. We should be able to report to the teacher.

GW 6th grader: More staff in the hallways.

GW 6th grader: This is hard because many kids will not care, and many kids will not report.

GW 6th grader: Bullying happens in classroom, bathrooms. To give them consequences because it is not ok to bully

GW 7th grader: If someone would hit me, I would want to hit them back but I wouldn't like to get suspended because of self-defense.

GW 7th grader: A zero tolerance policy would help (immediate expulsion policy) or in-school suspension because that is more of a punishment.

GW 7th grader : GW doesn't do much to prevent this problem. We should have a self-defense rule.

GW 7th grader: I feel like most people try to ignore the bullying and don't get help. I feel that we don't have enough support for the bullied.

GW 7th grader: Self-defense should be a factor

GW 7th grader: We need more mentors to help out the people who are getting bullied or help the bullies.

GW 7th grader: Support to those who are bullying and those who are being bullied

GW 8th grader: Don't tease no one

GW 8th grader: I feel like the school has done nothing against bullying. Even teachers make fun when the school mentions anti-bullying.

GW 8th grader: Kids that get bullied need to speak up

GW 8th grader: When it is reported, it should not be taken lightly.

GW 8th grader: Get support for those who have been bullied and help make sure it doesn't happen again. The consequences should be worse for bullying.

GW 8th grader: There can be program to help people that are being bullied.

GW 8th grader: Teach victims how to overcome it.

GW 8th grader: People stop being stupid.

GW 8th grader: These kids NEED people to talk to!

GW 8th grader: Kids who are bullied or have been bullied need to be talked to. In some cases it causes depression and PTSD. Kids need to be talked to.

GW 8th grader: Stop bullying on the spot when it's happening.

GW 8th grader: Personally, I feel like GW2 takes care of bullying terribly. Bullies get off so easy by saying it's a joke. Even if you get expelled you can come back next semester. That's stupid; expulsion is when you never come back.

GW 8th grader: We need more mentors and counselors who can almost set the example and are always kind.

GW 8th grader: Get rid of people with too much swag.

GW 8th grader: There should be more consequences for people that get caught bullying others.

GW 8th grader: Don't just use stupid signs and campaigns because they don't work.

Hammond 6th grader: ISS or detention

Hammond 6th grader: That's too much. Because if they are in the bathroom that's just like stalking them.

Hammond 6th grader: Leave other student alone.

Hammond 6th grader: Some teachers ignore.

Hammond 6th grader: Maybe safety patrols on the bus (youth). The patrols should be us middle schoolers.

Hammond 6th grader: Suspend and give detentions and be more strict on bullies to prevent it.

Hammond 7th grader: Treat others like you want to be treated.

Hammond 7th grader: Let the bullies have a chance to say why they are bullying the person.

Hammond 7th grader: Have a program – I already made a program. NMBP! (No More Bullying Program) Check it out, FCH1. Nikhita Bhanot

Hammond 7th grader: Dress code needs to be less strict here! If you are going to keep the dress code, you can't let some students walk away and others face the consequences! That's not fair! Some students leave the house in one thing and arrive in another.

Hammond 7th grader: A lot of teachers see bullying and not make a big deal out of it. Also administrators need to talk to teachers and tell them to STOP bullying when they see it.

Hammond 7th grader: Cracking down on bullies and get the person that is being bullied and the bully together with counselors and let them talk about the issue.

Hammond 7th grader: More consistent consequences and not just inside but outside too.

Hammond 8th grader: Mentor kids who get bullied and bully people.

Hammond 8th grader: Make stronger consequences

Hammond 8th grader: Raise consequences

Hammond 8th grader: Make the bullies see how bullying is by letting them be bullied.

Stonewall 1st Session: I feel as if I'm getting bullied every day and the person that bullies me ends up hitting me, and then I fight back then I end up getting in trouble too (it's self-defense)

WHAT WOULD REDUCE THE NUMBER OF FIGHTS?

GW 6th grader: You could have students help other students.

GW 6th grader: Say stuff to your face.

GW 6th grader: More counselors. But I want Ms. Thomas.

GW 6th grader: Anger management classes for kids who fight continually.

GW 6th grader: We need mentors more for students that fight regularly.

GW 6th grader: Anger management therapists

GW 6th grader: There should be 6th graders in the hall at a time and just 7th graders in the hall at a time and just 8th graders in the hall at a time because it seems like younger kids see older kids fighting in the halls so they think it is a good idea to do that.

GW 6th grader: School should make a rule that don't fight in a school.

GW 6th grader: More staff

GW 6th grader: There are not enough staff to prevent bullying.

GW 6th grader: We need more people in the halls.

GW 7th grader: If students get in a fight, and they get suspended, they wouldn't care and they would repeat on doing what they always do.

GW 7th grader: In-school suspension

GW 7th grader: More peer mediation; bigger consequences; anger management; mentors

GW 7th grader: If we do more peer mediation then they could solve their problems; not through fighting but through talking.

GW 7th grader: School lunch needs to be better and not taste like plastic.

GW 7th grader: I don't think any of those will work because they can still get in fights after school and when they get suspended some kids might think it is a reward.

GW 7th grader: In-school suspension

GW 7th grader: We need more than just the consequences cause that's not going to help solve the issue. We just need more peer mediation so the students will be aware.

GW 7th grader: More aware of peer mediation programs.

GW 8th grader: Don't say stuff.

GW 8th grader: Who know. More consequences. I have seen 3 fights in one year in this school. That was when I had just started. Imagine how I felt.

GW 8th grader: I'm not sure.

GW 8th grader: Nothing, fighting is inevitable. Maybe not at school but it could carry on afterschool or before school.

GW 8th grader: Harsher consequences for fighting and more staff in the halls.

GW 8th grader: There should be people that should have the same consequences if they are fighting.

GW 8th grader: For everyone not to be so hateful and/or jealous. So mentors

GW 8th grader: GW is a perfect example of the fact that having more adults standing around doesn't do anything. It doesn't solve the problem.

GW 8th grader: Fighting is usually related to bullying not for the fun of it. When fights start it is crazy but to teaches kids not to be victims.

GW 8th grader: Fighting is half the fun of public school and it should not be eliminated do don't try.

GW 8th grader: If people weren't so nasty and rude. Also if kids weren't so afraid to tell a teacher someone wanted to fight them. Most times kids are afraid they will get hurt more for telling a teacher. SAFETY!

GW 8th grader: Make them hold hands as punishment in front of the cafeteria.

GW 8th grader: Influence the use of tactics to avoid fighting and use peer mediation (I don't want teachers in the bathroom w/me – very uncomfortable).

Hammond 6th grader: Assign mentors

Hammond 6th grader: If someone hears someone is going to fight they should tell.

Hammond 6th grader: Stay out all drama. Don't care what people think about you. A lot of cost too much money.

Hammond 6th grader: More guards/police

Hammond 6th grader: It shouldn't be ____ if someone hits, go and tell an adult. But second time if someone hits you, you try to walk away but if they keep hitting you, you hit them. It's simple as that. More staff is too much.

Hammond 6th grader: Students who fight should be expelled. Some teachers ignore the fight.

Hammond 6th grader: They should not have staff in the rest room because it would be uncomfortable.

Hammond 7th grader: Less drama

Hammond 7th grader: Stop violence, get suspended.

Hammond 7th grader: We should have more guidance counselors.

Hammond 7th grader: Anger management doesn't really help. To be honest, it might make people want to fight more. It can control their anger, but it makes more anger build up until they hit someone.

Hammond 7th grader: By letting students get their anger out another way, free time. We have anger management here and it doesn't work.

Hammond 7th grader: Since fights are after lunch they should release students little by little so a lot of people won't be let out at the same time and cause a lot of chaos.

Hammond 8th grader: Just make sure teachers realize when a kid's angry.

Hammond 8th grader: Hall monitors in every hall.

Hammond 8th grader: Having serious consequences. Telling them more about how others feel.

Hammond 8th grader: If fights occur, self-defense should not have a bad consequence.

A NUMBER OF ACPS STUDENTS HAVE INDICATED THEY HAVE CONSIDERED SUICIDE OR MADE A PLAN. WHAT KINDS OF ASSISTANCE DO THESE STUDENTS NEED?

Hammond 6th grader: More counseling

Hammond 6th grader: They should go to jail.

Hammond 7th grader: I think these kids need to stop.

Hammond 7th grader: This needs to stop!

Hammond 7th grader: This needs to stop.

Hammond 7th grader: More counseling. For example, last year I went through the same thing, but no one helped me.

Hammond 7th grader: Teachers and parents need to approach those children in a calm way and help them get through it. Make them feel happy and do stuff to help them try to eliminate the cause.

Hammond 8th grader: Some teachers don't know how to keep your mouth closed. Alternatives for doing it; self-inflicting pain; cut themselves or take drugs.

Hammond 8th grader: They can talk to them about it. They can tell them about their future and how much more things they have in front of them.

Hammond 8th grader: There should be more programs to keep them busy, have a test to see how they feel each month and have a mentor to talk to.

Hammond 8th grader: The kids can have a therapy session.

WHAT WOULD HELP TEENS MAINTAIN A HEALTHY BODY WEIGHT?

GW 6th grader: Subway, recess, longer gym period, not more running

GW 6th grader: Play lacrosse

GW 6th grader: More healthy lunches

GW 6th grader: We NEED better school lunches. Fun, yummy ways to eat (e.g. low fat cupcakes with rainbow sprinkles)

GW 6th grader: More time in PE

GW 6th grader: More PE classes; more sports

GW 6th grader: More PE classes; more sports during school

GW 6th grader: To have more opportunities for sports and healthy cooking classes; more PE classes

GW 6th grader: Be able to go to the gym workout room after school.

GW 6th grader: Physical activities; healthier diets at school; fruits and vegetables should be promoted.

GW 6th grader: More PE classes

GW 6th grader: If we don't have homework because we sit and get fat instead of being outside; better school lunches.

GW 6th grader: Physical things, more PE classes; more sports, better school lunches, lacrosse, recess, less homework.

GW 7th grader: Having more healthy foods in the cafeteria and more fun active activities in gym that everyone would enjoy.

GW 7th grader: Mandatory elective for people who are an unhealthy weight because not everyone participates in gym. Nutrition lecture followed by preparing the food and eating it.

GW 7th grader: I feel kids shouldn't be worried about their weight. They would be more willing to eat healthy if the school food was good.

GW 7th grader: Not allowing unhealthy food in school; more exercise during gym; more running; better food; rewards for eating good food.

GW 7th grader: The school is giving the money to band and other things, but the physical education program isn't really enough. We don't have enough money for the equipment in the gym.

GW 7th grader: Longer gym periods – honors gym

GW 7th grader: We need more fun physical activity and different food that doesn't taste like cardboard.

GW 7th grader: The gym period should be longer and have more equipment. Make parents aware about what teens are eating.

GW 8th grader: To go outside more

GW 8th grader: Teens can maintain a good healthy weight if ACPS had more PE hours because when PE done, then they don't care about the weight.

GW 8th grader: Learn to eat at a minimum.

GW 8th grader: Stop eating so much

GW 8th grader: Get better, fresher lunches

GW 8th grader: If school lunches were healthier, because I truly believe they are a part of the problem. Tiny school lunches make kids go home and eat more.

GW 8th grader: Don't be hypocritical and say you want us to healthy, and then serve us terribly unhealthy school lunches

Hammond 6th grader: Better food! More P.E and good chefs; more pizza recess

Hammond 6th grader: We need more lines for choices for lunch.

Hammond 6th grader: Cooking classes

Hammond 6th grader: Good and better food in the cafeteria.

Hammond 6th grader: Better organic foods in cafeteria.

Hammond 6th grader: More PE and recess

Hammond 6th grader: Recess and longer PE time

Hammond 6th grader: Some type of break during school to go outside.

Hammond 6th grader: Recess

Hammond 6th grader: Recess. Better chefs in the cafeteria.

Hammond 6th grader: We need recess (some free time).

Hammond 6th grader: recess

Hammond 6th grader: recess

Hammond 7th grader: Not physical education but dancing or doing something fun to lose weight.

Hammond 7th grader: More healthy eating classes.

Hammond 7th grader: Working out, eating healthy
 Hammond 7th grader: Better food
 Hammond 7th grader: More basketball
 Hammond 7th grader: More fruit
 Hammond 7th grader: The school makes us buy fruits and vegetables but no one eats them because they are nasty
 Hammond 7th grader: My opinion is that you can't really help them because it is their choice and life. Also what they do at home is up to them.
 Hammond 7th grader: More PE time; 2 hours
 Hammond 8th grader: More sports teams for everyone to participate.
 Hammond 8th grader: Make a trainer come twice a month; more physical field trips.
 Hammond 8th grader: A longer PE class period.
 Hammond 8th grader: Kids that need to eat more
 Hammond 8th grader: More physical trips, and better protein (?) food
 Hammond 8th grader: I think you should do more school sports like crew and healthy cooking classes would be nice for those who want it.
 Hammond 8th grader: More PE time. More crew time. More physical field trips
 Hammond 8th grader: More physical field trips and longer PE.
 Hammond 8th grader: A physical fitness elective. Better food in cafeteria

ALEXANDRIA'S TEEN PREGNANCY RATE IN 2011 WAS THE THIRD HIGHEST IN THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGION, BEHIND ONLY MANASSAS CITY AND FALLS CHURCH CITY. HOW CAN THAT RATE BE REDUCED?

Hammond 6th grader: Don't be sexually active.
 Hammond 6th grader: Health class should be more scarier so students don't have sex.
 Hammond 6th grader: Don't be sexual.
 Hammond 6th grader: Give out condoms
 Hammond 7th grader: By letting teens know the consequences.
 Hammond 7th grader: Give us condoms
 Hammond 7th grader: Rap it up and learn how to use condoms
 Hammond 7th grader: Use condoms, give teens more condoms
 Hammond 7th grader: Use condoms
 Hammond 7th grader: Use protection; no horny teen; stop hooking up
 Hammond 7th grader: Don't have sex
 Hammond 7th grader: Learn how not to have sex or stop being horny or wrap it up
 Hammond 7th grader: ABSTINENCE!!!!
 Hammond 7th grader: Learn how to be abstinent.
 Hammond 8th grader: Speakers that come in who have been involved in a teen pregnancy to talk about consequence
 Hammond 8th grader: Have clinics; parents talk to their child
 Hammond 8th grader: Provide birth control and condoms; have a campaign
 Hammond 8th grader: Warn them about it, the risks they may have ahead of them and the disadvantages you may have.
 Hammond 8th grader: Responsibilities that it comes with.
 Hammond 8th grader: People who get pregnant when they were teens to talk to students about their responsibility and consequences they had to fact during their pregnancy.
 Hammond 8th grader: Tell teens more about condoms
 Hammond 8th grader: Get free condoms at school starting in 8th or 9th grade. Also have more assemblies about consequences of having sex as a teen. Engaging parents of pregnant teens is a good idea. We should be awarded for not getting pregnant.
 Hammond 8th grader: Get free condoms. We should get award for not getting pregnant.
 Hammond 8th grader: Show how it can affect you because you're not prepared.
 Hammond 8th grader: Stop girls from being fact and give more advertisement on condoms. Some parents should stress the consequences of being parents.

A THIRD OF ACPS MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE INDICATED THEY HAD USED ALCOHOL (287) AND ALMOST A FIFTH (167) SAID THEY HAD TRIED SMOKING. CORRESPONDING PERCENTAGES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WERE 54% FOR ALCOHOL (1,018) AND 36% (682). WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE TO DISCOURAGE DRINKING AND SMOKING?

Hammond 6th grader: Do drug tests

Hammond 6th grader: Teaching about peer pressure

Hammond 6th grader: When the kids are in their classes, they should get dogs to sniff out all of the lockers.

Hammond 6th grader: More smoke alarms. More cameras in school.

Hammond 6th grader: More smoke detectors

Hammond 6th grader: More cameras

Hammond 7th grader: Making sure to have group sessions about drinking and drugs.

Hammond 7th grader: Show them what can happen and do drug test.

Hammond 7th grader: Drug and alcohol tests in school. Mandatory and tell parents and if parents don't care then have counseling

Hammond 7th grader: Parents should know that it is highly important for parents to know

Hammond 8th grader: The commercials about lung cancer.

Hammond 8th grader: Have a real-life person come in and talk about it who has drank or done cigarettes.

Hammond 8th grader: Show them the risks they may have later on.

Hammond 8th grader: Too easy to access it

Hammond 8th grader: Very unattractive. Make people look old. Not just killing one person's lungs but people around. Stores don't stress IDs a lot

Stonewall 1st Session: Smoking: show more voice box advertisements

WHAT WOULD HELP TEENS WHO WANT TO WORK FIND EMPLOYMENT?

GW 6th grader: Since we have a kindergarten thing in GWMS, we kids should go down and help.

GW 6th grader: We should teach teens how to do hands-on CPR. Create activities and groups to help the community that are fun and not boring.

GW 6th grader: Go to elementary schools to help kids.

GW 6th grader: Intern program

GW 6th grader: Paid internships

GW 6th grader: To maybe do community service.

GW 6th grader: Make it so kids can get jobs and earn money.

GW 6th grader: Create more in-school jobs; help the pre-school in G2.

GW 6th grader: Have more group opportunity, and let many teens have jobs so they know what it is like to be an adult.

GW 7th grader: Create a teen "labor union" that had certification classes, recommended babysitting wages and a bank.

GW 7th grader: Baby sitting, make a service for baby sitting and hire people.

GW 7th grader: More kids will know what they would like to do in the future instead of being unemployed.

GW 7th grader: We need more jobs for teens not just during the summer.

GW 7th grader: I think that teachers and staff center should become more involved.

Hammond 6th grader: Have jobs in school then we get paid money.

Hammond 6th grader: Have volunteer work at recreation like after school or summer or weekend.

Hammond 6th grader: Have someone teach us about how to get a job.

Hammond 6th grader: Put up some summer jobs or jobs near school. Jobs inside the school

Hammond 6th grader: They should have a session for two weeks each for finding jobs that hire young people. Can work for money or for school jobs

Hammond 6th grader: Have jobs in your community

Hammond 6th grader: I think that teens should have jobs to make their own money so it can get you ready for the future.

Hammond 6th grader: Let kids have a real job.

Hammond 7th grader: Jobs with \$\$\$

Hammond 7th grader: \$10 an hour

Hammond 7th grader: More jobs for teenagers.

Hammond 7th grader: \$30 per hour depending on the physical and mental strain.

Hammond 7th grader: We should make \$10 an hour because it teaches us responsibility.

Hammond 7th grader: If we work we get \$10 an hour

Hammond 7th grader: Teens can do simple stuff like dog-walking and get paid.

Hammond 7th grader: Job opportunities for younger children!

Hammond 8th grader: Have somebody go out to find jobs for teens and post them on the ACPS website to help students know about available jobs.

Hammond 8th grader: Offering more opportunities for teens. Having a safe website

Hammond 8th grader: More involvement to youth

Hammond 8th grader: Jobs should understand when and how teens can get to their jobs.

Hammond 8th grader: I think creating a volunteer internship would be really smart because I need to make money. Paid internships would be really smart.

Stonewall 1st session: The only thing I don't agree with is that you have to make a certain amount of money in order for the kids to get a summer job through JobLink program